

Handpuppets

1. Why do you use hand puppets in English lessons?

Using a hand puppet in lessons offers various opportunities. The hand puppet acts as mediator between the teacher and the pupils in all kinds of situations. It can help the pupils to express their thoughts by whispering the needed vocabulary into their ears. The children will not have to fear that they fail in front of the teacher and their classmates because the hand puppet will help them and they can follow the lessons uninhibited.

The teacher can use the hand puppet to let it actively create the lesson and its content: it can create tension, curiosity, and excitement, and it can be used to impart knowledge by repeating something said or repeat it wrongly so that the students have to correct it. During the first steps of the second language acquisition the teacher is the main person who is talking to the hand puppet because the emphasis is put on their auditory abilities. The puppet is the ideal partner for dialogues with one partner. The teacher can act out small scenes while the students observe. By this, the pupils learn how and in which situations they can use language. For the teacher, the hand puppet helps to represent the foreign language in an authentic way. The hand puppet can only speak and understand English, therefore the students are forced to use actively the new language. During the whole lesson the children should be able to identify themselves with the puppet.

2. Different types of hand puppets

There are different types of hand puppets available; each of them offers different possibilities for games and the usage in classrooms.

For the early language acquisition of a foreign language the most important body parts are the head and especially the mouth, as they have to be movable. By moving head and mouth the puppet becomes more authentic, more real for the students. There are puppets that also have movable arms and legs for a further support of the play.

Of course you can buy hand puppets in all kind of shapes. Some prefer animals, like birds, rats, turtles, or dragons. Those are often used in the first and second year of the primary school. Others might prefer a human puppet, which is often used in the third or fourth year, as the students seem to think that they are funnier and cooler than animals. Some companies who create hand puppets also like to create a copy of famous TV characters, like the Sesam Street.

3. Rules for the usage of hand puppets

- a) The hand puppet needs its own place in the classroom
- b) The hand you use to impersonate the puppet should be relaxed, the wrist is the highest point so that the puppet can keep eye contact with the students and not look at the ceiling.
- c) The movements of the puppets should be used sparsely, depending on the size and the possible movements of the puppet.
- d) When the puppet doesn't speak or act the teacher should hold it in a neutral position.
- e) When the puppet is talking, the mouth should be moved in an authentic way.
- f) The pupils are always looking at the person who is talking to them:
 - When the teacher is talking to his pupils, the hand puppet is looking at the teacher.
 - When the hand puppet is talking to the pupils, the teacher is looking at the hand puppet.
Teacher and puppet never look at the students at the same time.
 - When teacher and puppet are talking to each other, they also have to look at each other. During this conversation the hand puppet is the only one who is allowed to look at the students from time to time.

4. What can I use a hand puppet for in class?

- for introducing new vocabulary and sentence structures
- for repeating and deepening knowledge
- for storytelling
- for singing songs
- for playing action games
- for creating rhymes
- for creating authentic situations through dialogues between teacher and puppet

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Dialogues for handpuppets

1.) Dragon – student

D: Hello!

S: Hello, my name is... and what is your name?

D: Dragon!

S: Where do you live?

D: In a cave near the forest.

S: Do you have any Dragon-friends?

D (cries): No! I haven't any friends!

S: Poor little Dragon!

What are you doing the whole day?

D: I destroy everything and burn everything down because I'm so sad and lonely!

Do you want to be my friend?

S: Of course! Let's meet this afternoon!

D: Okay!

2.) Puppet – Student

P: Hey, where are you from?

S: I'm from Koblenz, and where are you from?

P: I don't tell. It's a secret.

S: Come on, tell me. I want to know it!

P: Ok. I'll whisper it in your ear.

S: Oh you're from Australia! Great!

P: Have you ever been to Australia before?

S: No I haven't been there before.

P: Then come and visit me next summer.

S: Hello.

P: Hello.

S: What's your name?

P: My name is Banani. What's your name?

S: My name is Katja. How old are you?

P: I'm ten years old.

S: What's your favourite food?

P: I love chocolate! What's your favourite food?

S: I like chocolate too and I like you too.

S: Hi, where do you come from?

P: I'm from Canada.

S: What's your name?

P: My name is Gulliver.

S: Why are you here?

P: I visit my friend.

S: Who is your friend?

P: It's Melanie. And what's your name?

S: My name is Steffi.

P: And where are you from?

S: I'm from Frankfurt.

P: Oh, that's nice. But I have to go now. My friend is waiting. So have a nice day Steffi.

P: Good morning. What's your name?

S: My name is... What's your name?

P: My name is... Where are you from?

S: I'm from Koblenz.

P: Oh that's a nice town.

S: Yes it is. And where are you from?

P: I'm from Africa.

S: What are you doing there the whole day?

P: I'm climbing up the trees and eating bananas.

S: And what about your family?

P: Oh, I have a great family and we have a lot of fun together.

S: Hi, what's your name?

P: My name is cookie monster.

S: Where are you from?

P: I'm from the sesam street, hahaha.

S: How old are you?

P: I'm five years old. And I like cookies. What do you like?

S: I like bananas and sweets.

P: Oh no, I don't like bananas.

S: But they are very healthy.

P: Ok, I'll try one